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communities in ACTION

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A terrible summer for this land. Slums of our great cities burn. Citizens at murderous war with each other in ghetto streets.

And yet, the important paradox of this strange season of our history is that even as the destructiveness of rioting and insurrection explodes — the same furious neighborhoods are host to constructive programs of change.

Programs, of course, that are no more than small beginnings. Perhaps the real tragedy is that these programs amplified would quickly bring us a needed order and a speedier approach to a solution.

It was this way on Manhattan's lower east side on July 27 — rumors of riots spread through the slums paradoxically along those same streets where some most positive approaches to community action are being developed.

What follows is a report both on the tensions in a community of the poor ("Powder Keg") and on "bread and butter" anti-poverty projects, which have as their aim the exit from poverty through the efforts of the poor: They are as follows:

REHAB BEATS NOTHING!

FOOD BUYING CLUB

POWDER KEG

On the morning of July 27, 1967 a man named Val Coleman was waiting for a riot to explode in Manhattan's teeming Lower East Side slums.

Coleman's business is news. He is Mobilization for Youth's public information director. He and his staff keep the city informed on MFY's war on poverty efforts. To do that he must know the community intimately. On this day what Coleman knew of his community had him alternately sad, angry, powerless and hopeful.

A writer and photographer from this magazine had arrived on the Lower East Side on an assignment remote from the possibility of rioting. Coleman was to be their guide on this mission but as he explained on the morning of the 27th:

"I'd like to show you around but we have every indication this section might blow to hell tonight . . . that's keeping me kind of busy."

His next words were into the telephone. He said: "Hi Inspector, yeah we heard the same thing. 32 rifles were shipped into Avenue D last night. Okay, keep in touch."

Then to his visitors, he said: "That was the top riot fuzz. We're all nervous down here. If the cops keep cool and the people keep cool and maybe it rains tonight we might squeak through."

TIME: 9:30 a.m. East Second Street

The last thing Coleman wanted to be bothered with that morning was visitors from Washington. He was tense, red-eyed from lack of sleep, unshaven from lack of time but trying hard to be the good public information man. But there was a threatening riot to consider.

"No offense," he said, "but with all this brewing I just don't feel like extolling our programs, not some of them anyway, not anything like how we are helping poor mothers and little children and nice old folks."

He thumped his New York *Times*. The headlines

TIME: 10:00 a.m. East Fifth Street

Coleman had said it was all right to do photography in the neighborhood. "Hell, these are the most photographed people on earth," he'd said. "Daytime is fine. Night time is trouble for anybody who lives outside the neighborhood right now."

On 5th Street, however, the *Communities in Action* photographer was accosted by a young Puerto Rican male, presumably drunk, bare chested, no shoes, "You don't take no pictures around here, get the hell out of here."

reported horror. Detroit was still burning and to a lesser degree the same tragedy was unfolding in a score of other American cities.

"You know what Detroit means to me?"

The answer was no.

"It means for all we are doing we haven't any programs that reach the people we must reach. The shooters and burners. You know who they are? I'll tell you, they're Moynihan's missing Negro fathers. Forty percent of Detroit's black families are fatherless. Same as here. [See **"ROOT CAUSES,"** Page 20.]

"Well they are not missing any more. They're being heard from now."

It was 9:30 a.m. Val Coleman was an angry man. There was a long day of uncertainty ahead for him, a longer night and it was clear that here was a man involved in community progress who was experiencing the sinking feeling that his community might be in flames by nightfall.

"Don't mind me but I don't feel like keeping it all bottled up inside."

Two community organizers came up quickly and told the photographer, a young woman, to move out quickly and not to argue about anything. She said: "I answered him in Spanish, that slowed him down long enough for me to back off, but what would have happened if I couldn't speak any Spanish?" She did not get an answer. The poverty workers just urged her to walk faster.

TIME: 11:30 a.m. East Second Street

We returned to find Coleman still manning the telephones. "A guy you want to talk with is Elwood Jefferson, he's a detached worker and is in direct contact with the guys who would be fighting the police if it blows up here."

Jefferson, reserved, well-dressed, looked anything but a street social worker. At first glance. Then you see that he has a toughness and when he began to talk, having sized us up as more friend than enemy, that toughness melted.

EXCERPTS FROM A TAPE RECORDED INTERVIEW

Q. I arrived in East Second Street this morning while Val Coleman was on the phone wheeling and dealing because he kept hearing news that the Lower East Side community was going to blow up at any time. Here for this interview also is a detached worker for MFY. Mr. Jefferson probably has the most immediate view of this situation. How long have you been tense?

ELWOOD JEFFERSON: We got the news the city was going to blow about a week ago, wouldn't you say?

COLEMAN: Yeah, about a week.

JEFFERSON: And it first started with rumors from the kids up the street that it was going to blow, and at night groups of people

began, you know, centering in different parts of the community. I guess in about three or four areas specifically—Fifth Street, between Avenues B and C, Fifth Street between Houston and Stanton, and Kenton between Delancey and Houston. And the other area is the stretch which is called the D, Avenue D, which runs from about Tenth Street which is predominantly Negro over there.

"We haven't seen any case of racial hostility, one group against the other, just a thing that they feel as though something is going to happen. And if it does, I think the ones that are going to blow are the hard-core kids, the kids that just don't fit into the traditional service pattern, the kids that don't come into Mobilization and get a job.

"It's the kid that needs special attention, has his own particular problem, has been rejected by Mobilization so he's left to make his way on the street. He's the one that really wants to do the damage.

Q. By rejected, what do you mean?

JEFFERSON: Well, we have—I guess the basis here is our job training program where a kid has to come in to an in-take worker and then go to a counselor and be counselled and so forth. And there are just some kids that can't function under this strict structure, so he then is left, you know, to his own, dismissed as being unable to work with. You know, he's left out there in the streets, involved in whatever the hell he cares to get involved in.

Q. What about the young adult males?

JEFFERSON: They're just hanging around doing nothing. I mean, they have no gig (job) at all, and push comes to shove when the younger adults break loose and start the looting and so forth, these guys, I think, are going to go right behind them. They've got the same damn frustrations.

Q. But you think here it would begin with the kids. The teeners.

JEFFERSON: That's a hard question. It all depends upon the incident that sets it off. It could involve the teenagers, it could involve an older man, it could be anything that's going to—it just takes a spark, and we've got the explosion.

This thing didn't just start with Newark. Like you've got to prepare for this every summer.

Q. Okay. Well, let's get back to the, you know, the immediate tensions. Here's my concern. A community action agency has limited responsibility in areas of civil disturbances. That's like saying that all the problems began with anti-poverty programs, which is crazy.

COLEMAN: Well the anti-poverty programs are supposed to stop it over the long run. In a sense it hasn't ceased with the creation of anti-poverty programs. People automatically insist upon assuming that either the anti-poverty programs are wrong or filled with a bunch of radicals who are inciting the whole mess.

Q. Well, since Newark blew, what I want to know pragmatically, since the hot summer began, what are some of the things you guys do as a matter of course, as a matter of living in this kind of situation three or four years now.

COLEMAN: After the East Harlem riots it became apparent that the presence of the tactical police force was extremely dangerous, particularly . . .

Q. Would you explain this to the national audience . . .

COLEMAN: They have a sort of elite trooper outfit called the tactical police force that's almost entirely white, specially riot-trained, 700 men, and they move into quote "riot" unquote situations on a moment's notice. There are a lot of very little tricky things about it, and obviously and particularly in this area, people get up very tight when TPF men are in here. We had a meeting with the local precinct commanders both of the Seventh and Ninth precincts and asked them not to use sirens, to keep TPF out, and we made an interesting discovery.

I don't know whether I told you about this, Elwood, but we discovered that when there is a code that they use in the car, that when a patrolman is in trouble they say code 1311. Now what that means is that everybody within the hearing of that code number should focus—should suddenly come to that point. Now, it's incredibly stupid, a little mechanical mistake. For example, if two guys, two Puerto Ricans were picking on a cop and he did a code 1311, it means there would be 40 cars in the area in ten minutes.

"And obviously that's the most provocative thing in the world. What we've asked them to do is to develop a lower code so they can respond without sirens and with a minimum of policemen to small brush-fire incidents. That's another thing we've done.

"Now, in a preventive sense, we are very anxious not to be the provokers of a riot, so we don't have a bunch of people deploying all around talking about 'keep it cool, keep it cool'. But we just sort of keep our ears open. Elwood and others have been on the street checking it out. I think it's important that we don't encourage rioting in a sense by being overly visible in our preparation for it. But there are a few covert things we've done which as long as this tape recording doesn't get broadcast all over the Lower East Side, we're straight. A few covert things we've done, for example, arranged for certain buildings to be open if trouble does break out, in other words, getting some medical supplies. We've made contact with certain doctors, etc.

Q. The easiest thing to do is to blame riots on the poverty program.

COLEMAN: Well, it's an oversimplification. We all know, you know, three hundred years it exists, and something's got to give. But—

JEFFERSON: And the people of the community can't get to the forces they want to get to. And that's why MFY may be the first target they'd destroy. We're the first ones to get—you know, TPF is down there, holding everybody off, the next thing is get MFY. Because, you know, we do represent the "structure".

I can see the windows of this building being broken, I can even see workers being attacked, you know. We're in a more vulnerable position than police because at least, you know, if push comes to shove, they've got night sticks and guns, they can defend themselves. But anti-poverty workers ain't got nothin' but our two feet. And if we don't run fast enough, you know, we'd be casualties up in the hospital someplace too.

Q. Do you have indications of this when you go out on the street?

JEFFERSON: Not particularly now, but I've heard—had indications that when, for instance, kids come in to ask for a job, and I can't get them a job, the first thing I hear is, you know, 'MFY's no damn good.' And somebody slams my door. Well, I think it's an indication of when, you know, a situation arises where people's needs aren't satisfied, and for instance, the kids can't go down to a specific employer, say, you wouldn't give me a job. What they do, the only thing they can do is go to the community worker and say, "you didn't get me a job."

Q. So you think often the Cap program can be vulnerable, right?

COLEMAN: The CAP program is vulnerable, both from the politicians who fund it, if it doesn't work out their way, and from the community if it doesn't work out, you know, to suit the community.

Q. Hell of a way to earn a living.

JEFFERSON: It ain't fun.

Q. Okay, so since Newark, have you been on the street more than you used to be?

JEFFERSON: Yeah. It's not really too important to be on the street in the daytime, it's the night-time when everything goes.

HIGH NOON—Avenue B

Joan Ransohoff, a pert, college trained community organizer, walks to work each morning at MFY through the Lower East Side slums. She was munching a sandwich in the Mobilization For Youth luncheonette, operated as a Neighborhood Youth Corps project by youngsters in the neighborhood. She had witnessed the confrontation between the street tough and OEO photographer. It was on Fifth Street, in the block where her prize project, a rehabilitated house, stands. [See **REHAB BEATS NOTHING,** Page 18.]

"I can feel the tension," she said, "I've been working here two years but today I can feel something. I used to walk along carefree. People know me but now when I pass by children stick out their feet to trip me."

She was joined at the table by a young man she introduced as a resident who operated a karate school, and was also a NYC worker. He was Negro and seemed a pillar of calm. But his next words were disturbing. "I'm putting my furniture in storage and taking my money out of the bank today. You hear about those 32 guns some revolutionaries are supposed to have shipped into Avenue D. Well I live on Avenue D and I don't much relish being burned out. Or shot out."

He was asked where was Avenue D. He gave a slight smile, "Two blocks from where we are sitting."

A visitor asked "Can anybody do anything?"

The karate instructor said "Well, I can talk to my guys, I do, and tell them to be cool but nothing more than that. I figure that's 20 or 30 that will listen to me or at least tell me what's on their mind but that is as far as it can go. There's not much really you can say to kids who have lived in these conditions."

"But I will not ask my group to go out and reason with people if things go off. That would be asking them to commit suicide."

Someone told him he looked as if he could handle himself. He snorted. "Karate won't stop bullets, that's for sure," then he excused himself and was gone.

TIME: 2 p.m. East Second Street

Coleman and other staff members were calmer now. They had been in constant touch with police and residents in the area.

The public information officer sat back from his desk and looked toward his visitors.

"I should spend all my money on medical supplies so less people die."

"After a morning of chasing rumors, of listening in the neighborhoods, of trying to figure where it would blow if it blew, of counsel and counter-counsel with police, this was the upshot.

". . . $500 worth of bandages, that's it and keep this building open if people need it. That's it."

His visitors remarked that there was a great sense of powerlessness about all of this, for anti-poverty workers, for the police, for the people in the community in general. "Chasing phantoms."

Coleman just looked tired. His look said you know why there are riots, I know why there are riots, but . . ."

We said our good-byes.

BREAD AND BUTTER PROGRAMS

Show us some CAP projects strong on self-help that focus on "right now." And MFY did.

SEWING CO-OP

A group of Puerto Rican and Negro women are operating their own garment factory on New York's Lower East Side.

So what?

Here's so what:

- most of the women are mothers with several children, they are all on welfare, they all want to get off welfare,
- there is every chance their venture will be a profitable one,
- they have chosen a high-demand area of industry where the products are continuously marketable, where they can perform sub-contracting,
- they are also in a job area that cannot be automated away,
- and their enterprise can, in turn, generate many more small businesses in their community.

This report concerns Comunidad Activa Escuela de Costura Fuersa Unida Sewing Cooperative on Manhattan's 6th St. but what really is involved here is "right now" programs—"turn-around" programs—anti-poverty projects that strike at the causes of poverty and begin giving the poor what they really need (self-respect, self-determination and money) "right now!"

The goal is to "turn them around." Away from welfare as a way of life, away from suicidal expressions of hopelessness (riots, insurrections, etc.) thus bringing significant numbers into the mainstream of this society as productive citizens.

The C.A.S.C.F. Sewing Cooperative, depending on your view, can be seen as "cottage industry" which Gandhi so wrongly thought would help India, or an idea with a "ripple effect," a small stone that eventually churns up healthy waves.

For the purposes of a dynamic Community Action spirit, the Sewing Cooperative is one of many such small stones.

This story is best told by Leslie Sherover, an attractive young Medieval history instructor turned Community Organizer for New York's Lower East Side anti-poverty agency, Mobilization For Youth.

The co-op is Leslie's "baby." She's "real proud of it."

Q. Okay, let's talk about the sewing co-op with Leslie Sherover.

MISS SHEROVER: The co-op's name explains part of its origin. It's called Comunidad Activa Escuela de Costura Fuersa Unida sewing school and co-op. These are two small, grass roots organizations made up largely of Puerto Ricans in about an eight-block area, who have been organized as a group for over a year.

Q. Are they all welfare recipients?

A. Most of them.

Q. Correct me if I'm wrong, but the need for a sewing club was an expressed wish that came from these women? You got them organized, or they got themselves organized. While this seemed a useful training function for them, you also said it was as much a reason to get out of the house and to relieve boredom and this kind of thing in the beginning for the women.

A. No, I said that although the rhetoric, both of organizers and of the people themselves, tends to be how bad welfare is, and we want to get off welfare, as a real immediate plan this isn't very realistic for a lot of people—for essentially two reasons.

One is that as the system exists now, there is very little economic incentive in working; that is, people with large families who went to work would probably be less well off than if they are getting welfare.

The second reason is that most of these women have small children, and there are no child-care facilities in this neighborhood. Therefore it's very unrealistic to think that they can go work outside full-time in factories when there is no place to leave their kids.

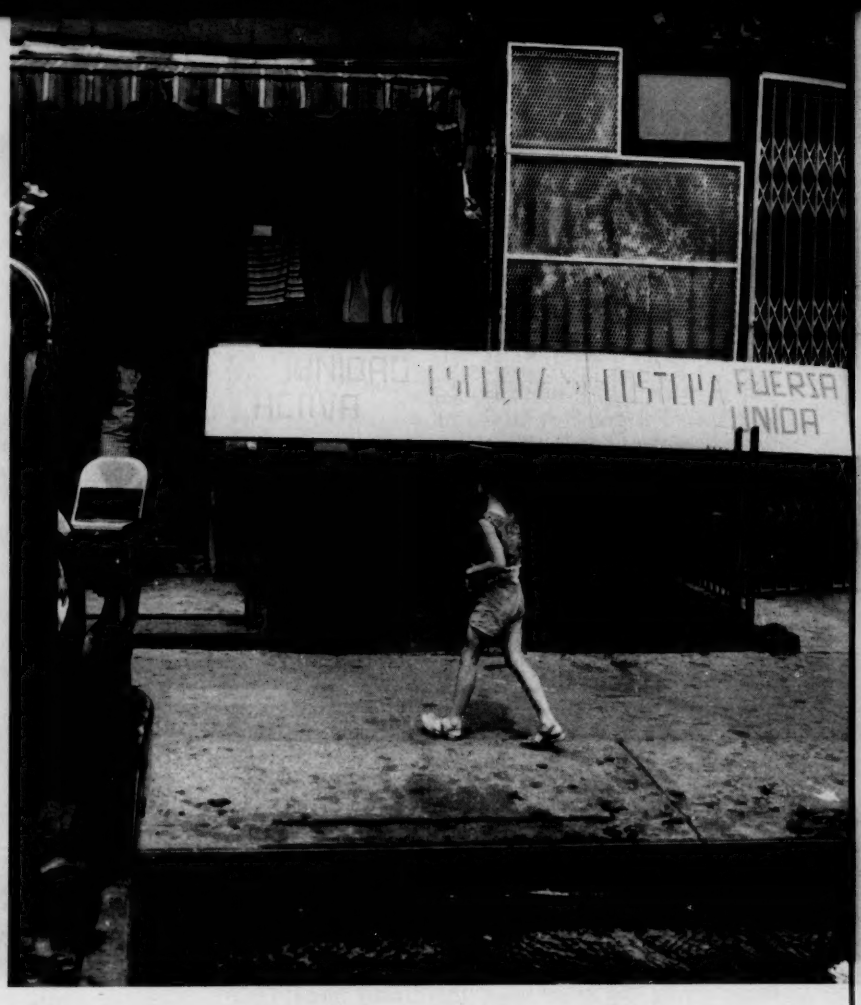
So, although this may be a long-range plan and a long-range intention of the sewing-training school in terms of what actually happens, not that many people actually go off and work. This is why it is part of the original plan of the sewing co-op to not only train people for jobs outside but, equally important, in fact more important, was to create a situation within the sewing cooperative itself where women who had been trained there could be employed within the cooperative itself.

This is a much more realistic objective. Women do not have to go out of the neighborhood. They can work part-time in an informal situation which meets their needs —whereas, if they can't work one day because of sickness, they're not fired, and etc., etc., or if they can only work three hours a day while a relative may take care of their children, this is also a possibility, whereas if they were working full-time in a very rigid situation outside in a factory, this would not be possible.

Also, not only for practical reasons, but—my own feeling is that ultimately there is much more potential in creating a situation where women can work in a cooperative production center rather than work in somebody else's factory where they could be exploited or have very little connection with their job and with the product.

Working in a cooperative, owned by them, where the decisions are made by them, there is a very intimate connection between their work and their lives and the community in which they live. So, not only for practical reasons, I think there is much more mileage in planning a training program with the goal of ultimately preparing women to be producers within a cooperative rather than just workers in an outside factory.

Q. Most people in Community Action have a general knowledge of how cooperatives are set up and structured. What we're after here are some projections. First, you're dealing with a group of how many women?



A. Well, since we began in March, there have been all together, including past members and present trainees, about a hundred people involved. As I said before, the sewing co-op itself is only one project of the group, which has many other interests, so that many people in the group are not directly involved in the co-op, and there are many people in the co-op who weren't in the group by their interest in job training or just in learning to sew.

Q. In working with this particular co-op, you don't foresee any problems with getting contracts for goods made?

A. No, the problem is not getting contracts; the problem is getting contracts which are not just turning the cooperative into a sweat shop. There's an abundance of hawks around just waiting to try to get a contract which will essentially be a sweat shop situation for us and a very profitable situation for them.

I do think that in order for the cooperative to be self-sustaining in the sense that the women are able to make a reasonably good living there, the co-op will have to depend on either contracts or on a situation where they are marketing outside of the neighborhood.

Q. Yesterday, you said the women will not sell at a profit—

A. Up until this time there has been a paradoxical situation in that the women feel very strongly about connecting the cooperative to the neighborhood and providing clothing at the lowest possible prices, that is, with just at the slightest possible raise above cost.

While providing clothing for people in the neighborhood, it

does not help the co-op to become financially profitable. Therefore I think that ultimately, when we do plan, and when the situation itself makes it necessary that we plan to be completely independent from any kind of subsidy, from OEO or Mobilization, that we will have to, very definitely, plan market. Now that they have seen what goes on, they're more willing to explore that possibility. It won't be explored to its fullest until the co-op reaches a real economic crisis, which it hasn't had to go through yet because we've had support from Mobilization for Youth.

A. There is no question but that it could be. There is always a market for clothing. Certainly the co-op could do as well as any one of these small businesses are doing.

Q. Would there be a point at which the co-op would have to go

on marketing outside, using the same techniques that private industry uses to market and to sell.

Q. Where do you expect to get these techniques implanted in your cooperative, your members?

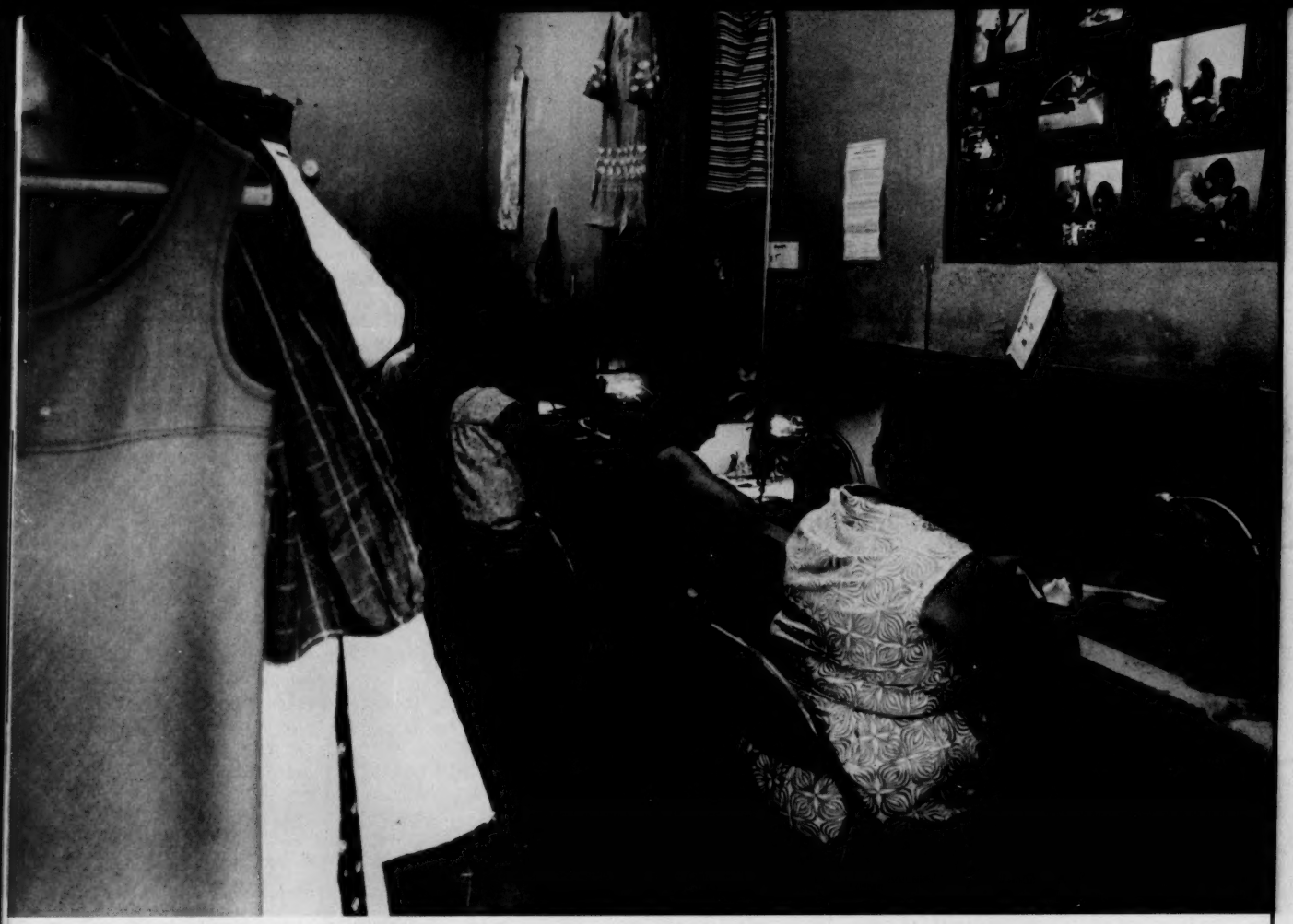
A. This is already beginning to happen. One of the contracts we're involved in is with a store in the neighborhood, actually in a slightly different neighborhood —a part of the neighborhood that caters much more to a "hippie" population and the dresses we are making for this store are sold for $25, whereas women in the co-op who are under this contract are only being paid $2.50.

The women have realized they could make the same dresses, mark them up in the same way and sell them in the same way if there was sufficient publicity and sufficient advertising to draw the

Q. You expect a crisis?

A. Well, not necessarily. We do have some kind of commitment from the Lower East Side Community Corporation for funding for next year. Then, the group may very well decide that they don't want poverty funds and become self-sufficient for other reasons, that is, reasons of, you know, all the hassle that one has to go through when one is dependent on OEO funds or government funds. There is more and more feeling in the co-op that it's not worth getting money from a source to which you have to then be beholden and have to conform to their rules and regulations.

Q. Do you think in New York, garment capital of the world, there is enough market for the co-op to become self-sustaining at some point? Do you want to hazard a projection on this?



beyond its present operation, you know the strict areas of manufacturing and processing, to bring in designers, merchandisers?

A. Yeah, I think so.

Q. Would this come out of co-op funds?

A. Right! One of the things we've been thinking about is doing work with beading, something that isn't done very much in New York, then only at great cost, and the products that are sold with beading work in them are very, very expensive. Now, a lot of the women happen to know how to do this work, have learned it in Puerto Rico, and we were very fortunate to inherit from a woman who used to own a beading store a whole lot of materials so that we may very well go into some kind of specialized work in this.

This is something we definitely will have to think about—that is, making the products of the cooperative not just something that you could buy somewhere else, but having something which is distinctive.

Q. Let's see, one last thing I was interested to pin you down on—Give me a projection.

A. On what?

Q. Just on your knowledge of the Lower East Side at this point—and this is oversimplified—sewing cooperatives—

A. Yeah, can they work?

Q. —well, we're assuming they will work. But what number of women, eventually, when they've been weaned away from welfare and they're willing to psychologically stand up and take a chance —you know, private enterprise or whatever this is. Do you see bringing a thousand people into the labor force?

A. Yes, I see it working, but I think certain things have to change first.

Q. Okay, what are they?

A. One is that there has to be—

Q. What about the union?

A. Well, let me get to that in a minute. The first thing is that there will have to be implemented in New York, child-care centers for lower class neighborhoods. Otherwise it will be impossible to wean women who are currently on welfare into the labor market. It's absurd—it's absurd even to discuss it unless there are child-care facilities.

Q. Would you consider, then, child-care centers as being a part of the overall manufacturing operation?

A. If the city doesn't come through—or the welfare department—with providing these facilities, the co-op itself will have to provide them. This was part of our original plan and failed because we didn't have the resources to keep it going. We didn't have a person who could be in charge and who knew enough about child care to generally run the nursery with the help of volunteer mothers. We were completely dependent on volunteer mothers, and it just didn't work.

I don't foresee a problem with the union if these cooperatives remain non-profit—which they will remain, in that legally a non-profit corporation is defined as an organization where the members that do the work get the money, and nobody is making a profit—that they shouldn't have any problems with the union. It's only when they are a profit-making organization that they would have any kind of trouble.

The other thing that has to change, which is changing—it's changing on a Federal level as well as on a city level—is the whole question of economic incentive; that is, that women who are beginning to work after maybe 20 years of not working, being on welfare, being provided with an economic incentive—that it would be worth their while to work. So far, for the most part, it just isn't worth their while; they are much better off on welfare than they would be if they are the sole support in a family, let's say, of five or six children. They just can't make it.

Q. What's going to change that, now?

A. Well, there's been talk—President Johnson has talked about it—of instituting the policy that if you work just for a certain amount of time, you can keep the money and not be taken off the welfare rolls. This began with the Economic Opportunity Act, where money that came from OEO was not taken off, was not deducted from the welfare check, but now it's being expanded to include all money that's made—it doesn't have to be just OEO money.

So this is happening and probably will come through in New York in the next year. And that will be a great help. It's already been announced as a policy; it just hasn't been implemented, in New York.

Q. You feel pretty good about your sewing cooperative?

A. I think it's beautiful.

Q. How long are you going to stick with it?

A. Well, that's a big problem. You see, I am an employee of Mobilization for Youth, and as of September 31, Mobilization will not be allowed to provide either staff or funds to these local community groups. This is because as of September 31, the Lower East Side Community Corporation will be the local agency directly responsible for channelling all poverty funds to local groups. So this group will be independent and will have to depend on whatever help it can get in terms of money as well as in terms of some kind of administrative assistance from the Community Corporation. Certainly if I'm in the neighborhood I'll be helping in an informal way, but it will no longer have anything to do with my official job—it can't.

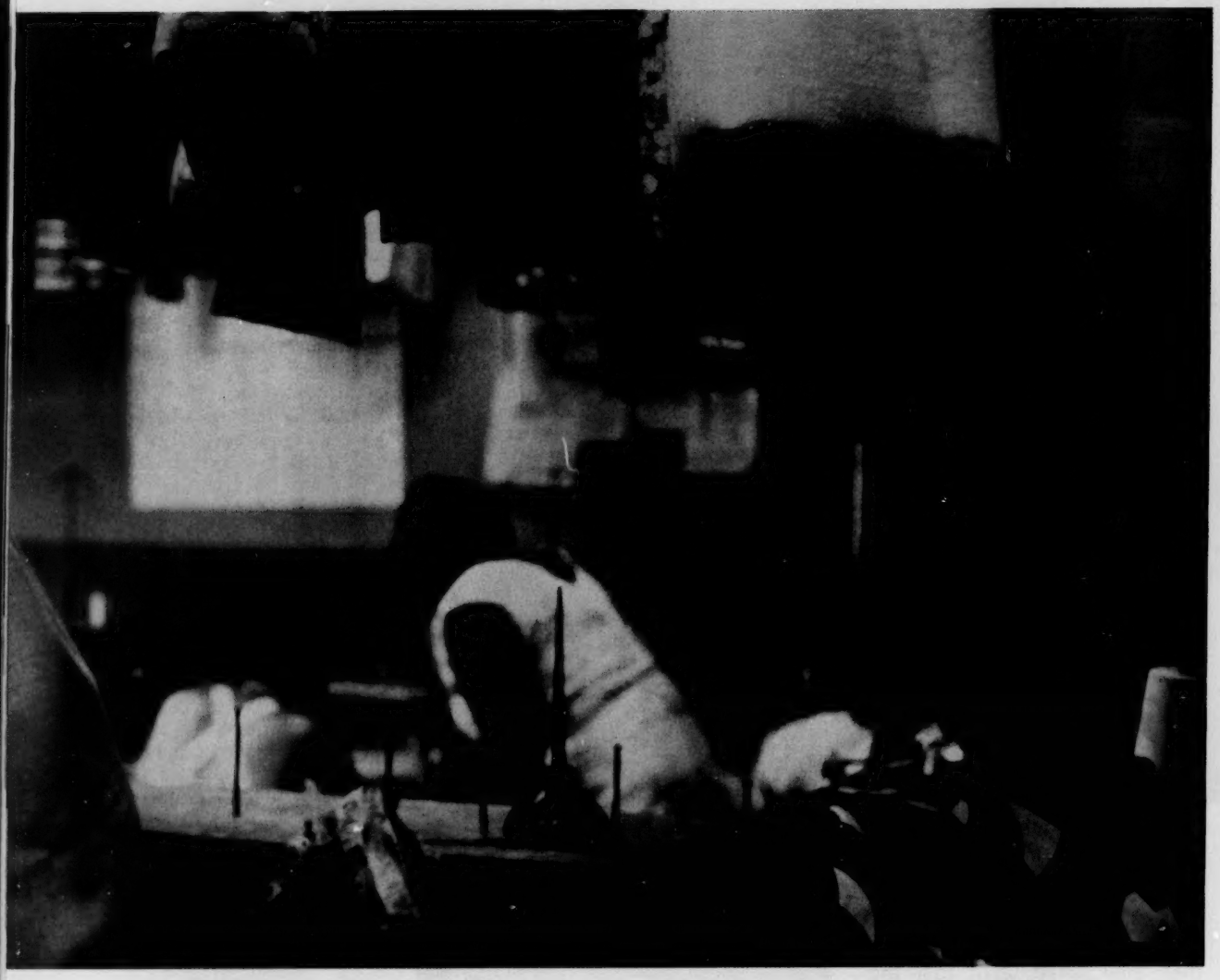
Q. Do you feel it's far enough along?

A. To run without my help? Yes, yes! I think it will still need professional help in terms of bookkeeping and some administrative help on a periodic basis, but certainly in terms of its day-to-day operations, the women who are in the co-op run it beautifully.

All the people who are in charge of the co-op are from the neighborhood, the teachers, the manager, and Mrs. Losada, who, although an employee of Mobilization for Youth, will leave Mobilization next year to work just for the co-op. The co-op will hire her from the funds they get from the Community Corporation. She's a woman that has worked as a foreman in a factory for about 11 years, and she is much more competent than I am in terms of any of the problems that have directly to do with sewing.

I've largely been just help in terms of administration and helping the group to really understand—you know, how a co-op might function, that is, what kinds of decisions are needed: what shall we do with the money? how much of the money should go back into the co-op? how much of the money should be kept by the people?, and helping to really institute, instill a certain democratic process within the co-op so that it will in reality not just in name be a cooperative enterprise.

Q. Well, you should be quite proud of how it's growing.



Postscript

CONVERTING DREAMS INTO COMMUNITY ACTION: As personally involved in the CASCF Sewing Co-op as Leslie Sherover has been, she or no one else close to the project is under any illusion that industrial cooperatives are the only or the largest factor in reducing American poverty to the present limits of poverty comparatively, say, to the Scandinavian countries. We have more than Scandinavia's resources and technology.

The important point for Community Action planners is that MFY, through Miss Sherover, did not impose a program of socio-economic change on a group of people. What the co-op represents as much as any thing else, is the "will" to effect change. The idea filtered up from the welfare mothers themselves. It was MFY, through Miss Sherover, who knew how to convert dreams into practice.

What happened then is that these women were subtly shepherded to move on their own on an idea that was their own.

Have we short-changed the possibilities for economic instincts in low-income people? In wishing to learn to sew, unconsciously these women might have been saying (in a raw state) one sure way of making money in the garment center of the world (Manhattan) is to be in the garment business, which makes perfect sense.

Designed for a ripple effect that turns the poor around

FOOD BUYING CLUB

Pedro Moterro knew there was more to life, more to hope for, than waiting around a crummy tenement in the horrendous Lower East Side slums for his welfare check to come.

No job. Pedro cared, for himself, and for the hundreds of his neighbors who were going through the same hell in Manhattan's lower "barrio" which begins at 14th Street and aches and throbs like an open wound until, paradoxially, it runs into the beginnings of New York's financial district.

Pedro's concerns were those of any poor man with pride, feeling and a need to be of meaning in a world that considered him only as something to be handed a welfare check or wished away.

That was two and one-half years ago.

Today Pedro manages the Puertorriquenos unidos, a food buying club on East 4th Street, which does $2,000 a week business, and enables some 250 neighborhood families to obtain good, fresh food at low prices.

The club is owned and operated by the people of the neighborhood and its history shows how an anti-poverty agency working to meet the immediate needs of poor people can begin to effect constructive changes in a community.

Danny Kronenfeld knows the story. He is the Mobilization For Youth community organizer who was there from Puertorriquenos' inception and is still there helping Pedro and his neighbors on a most vital aspect of poverty, food itself.

Puertorriquenos begins the day Pedro came to MFY to borrow a truck.

Kronenfeld recalls this as the symbolic day though it was preceded by a lot of hard door-to-door community organization work. MFY had earlier launched a consumer education program within its Lower East Side jurisdiction and Pedro and his neighbors were among those who had turned out for the meetings.

Talk of wise family budgeting and careful shopping had its effect on Pedro. Since he was on welfare and unable to get a job he had plenty of time to compare food prices in the neighborhood. What he discovered convinced him that the poor do pay more.

Kronenfeld remembers: "One day Pedro asked to

borrow our truck. He wanted to get food at better prices for himself and a group of his neighbors. We advanced him $75 and that is how it began."

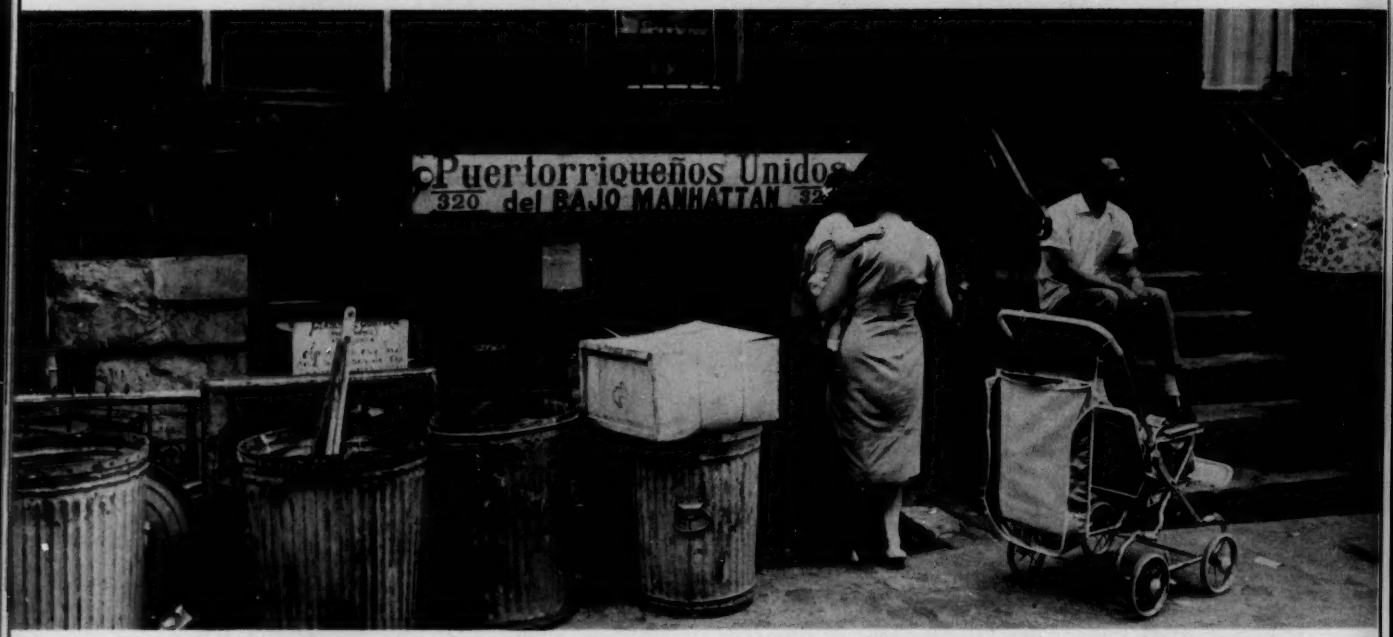
This was in 1964. At its height, the new, crudely-formed food buying cooperative never attracted over 25 or 30 people, rarely handled a volume of food over $300 a week.

After six months, Puertorriquenos fell apart.

Kronenfeld soon found himself far afield of community organization work per se. He had to double as book-keeper while the members of the cooperatives were learning how to work their ledgers. He still puts in a couple of hours a week "helping with the figures."

Operating a food buying club is, says Kronenfeld, relatively simple.

People put their money together and buy food at



"Blame it on extending credit and poor administration," said Kronenfeld. "Slowly the food club began to get beat by some of the people it served. There are always one or two families on a block not closely involved in the neighborhood but there just the same. Marginal families.

"What happened was that they built up a lot of credit in the club, the club executive committee did not restrain this, these families then deserted the club, the neighborhood and left Puertorriquenos holding the bag.

"Low-income people running their own enterprise could not withstand this kind of loss. Every penny is important and can be hurt.

But what must also be understood is that it is very hard for people in such neighborhoods not to want to let a neighbor have credit, they cannot very well refuse this because credit is very much a part of their own experience.

This time, with a nucleus of 10 people, the club began again, and resolved not to repeat past mistakes.

wholesale prices. In an intensely competitive city like New York anyone with the cash in hand and willingness to hunt down bargains can come up with a cooperative wholesaler.

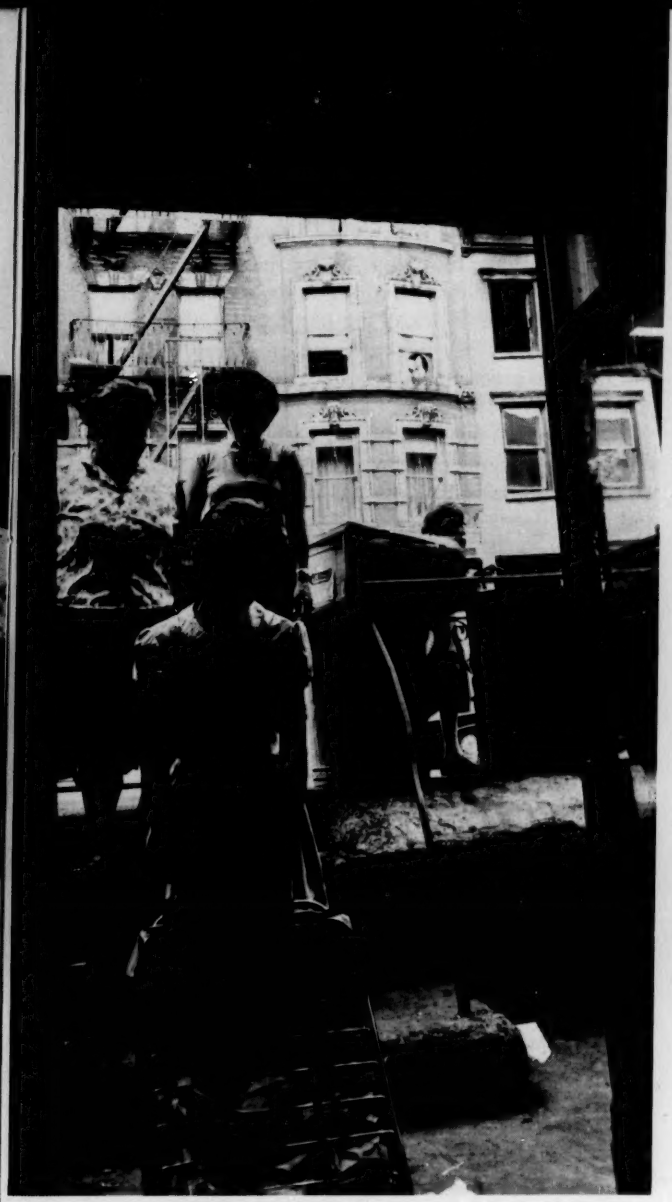
Puertorriquenos' operates this way:

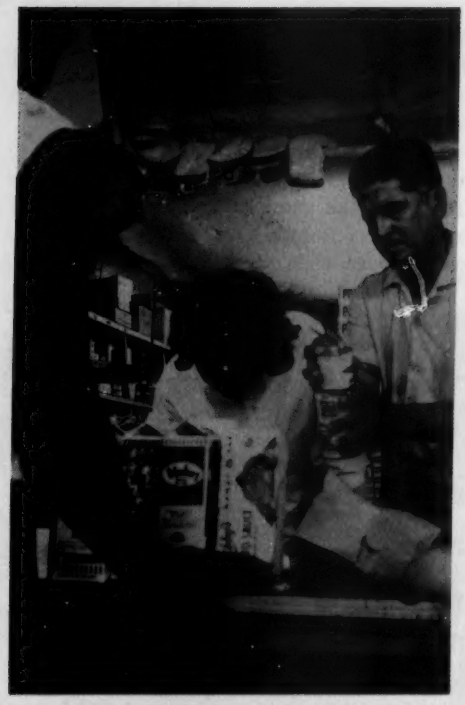
Families in the neighborhood plan their food needs for the week then bring their orders to the club. Deadline for ordering is Tuesday. The club staff then tallies up the total orders by category: meat, fish, etc., finds the proper wholesaler for each category and buys in bulk.

The club store, fashioned out of a tiny basement, is open on Thursdays and Fridays. Neighbors come in those days, pick up their orders, often get extra items that are in stock and not perishable, then after the weekend, the cycle begins all over again.

"At the beginning," explained Kronenfeld, "We carefully tallied everything but after building experience, we now approximate our volume orders to wholesalers.

"A food club," he said, "is not like a grocery store.





At first they had to stay away from perishables because it was difficult to get people to pay in advance for food."

"Now that Puertorriquenos has been in business for some time," he added, "they can stock some perishables and seldom get burned."

Kronenfeld feels this one place has reached its maximum, 200 members, $2,000 in buying a week, but the next step would call for a "series of these clubs throughout the Lower East Side with a central purchasing arrangement."

Already, Pedro and his group act as the wholesale buying headquarters for other groups in neighborhoods close by who have formed similar food clubs.

There is one predictable fly in this ointment: the small merchant.

He noted dryly that it was easier to motivate the poor to go into business for themselves than it was to get small businessmen to come together for a program to help them compete with the large food store chains.

Beneath the agency's thwarted approach to the independent grocers was the concern that if these businessmen could group for volume purchasing, the savings would be passed on to the low-income families they served.

It all came to nought.

Kronenfeld is bemused by the merchants. "Not long ago, they formed a group and went to the Human

Rights Commission to complain that food buying clubs are leading to tensions in the neighborhoods. That was really kind of way out. The merchants were the only ones that were tense . . ."

It is the ripple effect of a food buying club that makes Kronenfeld most hopeful.

It is quite easy to get people together for a simple thing like a buying club and then educate them to the broader aspects of consumer education, he feels, and should know, because when MFY attempted to launch a comprehensive consumer education program *first* it came a cropper.

The buying club points low-income people in many constructive directions economically.

"The beauty of it is," says Kronenfeld, "that a whole lot of other things open up, people begin to see the need for credit unions, burial insurance societies (that's a big thing in Puerto Rican life particularly) and housing cooperatives. When people see one thing working and they are involved, they begin to see the larger picture as well."

The burning question is whether a food buying club such as Puertorriquenos could continue to operate without being subsidized by MFY, anti-poverty funds, and professional guidance.

Based on his own experience with a low-income group, many of whom are not long arrived from Puerto Rico and have the difficulties of the language in addition to lack of business skills, Kronenfeld's answer is a hearty "yes."

Technically, he lists these basics as essential to getting a food club operational and eventually, self-sustaining.

"One paid indigenous person on staff. (A Pedro Moterro, for example, who knows his neighbors, knows the neighborhood life-style, who has qualities both of responsibility and leadership. Salaries for such staffers in the New York area now are in the $5,000-$6,000 per annum bracket.)

"A professional worker (salary open) to set up the books," and of course, though Kronenfeld did not say it, a community organizer who can see the buying club for itself and as part of a much larger program: i.e.: ending poverty and creating opportunities for people to solve their own problems with a minimum of direction—a guy like himself.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It was Thursday, July 27. Pedro Moterro was behind the counter at Puertorriquenos. The small shop was jammed with neighborhood housewives. Spanish was the dominant language. The club manager was busy with orders. He hurried back and forth from stock shelves to counter with foodstuffs. A visitor held up a tape recorder. "Got time to answer some questions about your food club?" "I guess so," Mr. Monterro looked at the waiting customers. He began to answer questions in a heavily accented, softly spoken English. The girls behind the counter helping him were rapidly piling up orders. Young children were playing in the doorway, a phone rang, babies were crying, shopping carts were being hauled in and out crammed with food.

The interview went slowly. Finally the visitor said "I'd better let you get back to your work."

Then Mr. Monterro gave his first smile. "Yes, we are busy. We have a lot to do."

In 1964, Monterro was a man standing around waiting for a welfare dole he did not want in the first place.

In 1967, he is a man who has too much to do to stand around waiting. Which is what anti-poverty programs are supposed to be all about.

How to wet-nurse a cooperative for the poor into life is not something you get out of books. Cooperatives go back a thousand years. Going into a neighborhood, however, that economic self-determination has never penetrated—unless of course you consider being on welfare or selling drugs or shop lifting economic self-determination—and getting a cooperative to grow on such seemingly poor soil, well, that is new.

When Dan Kronenfeld talks about food buying clubs in New York's Negro-Puerto Rican east side slums, he is worth listening to. You won't find his experiences in your public library.

For example:

"In poor neighborhoods, the feeling is always there that someone is making money on this.

"We allay this feeling by setting up a very general and broadly based executive committee. You know, many kinds of people from the neighborhood. Then the cooperative has to make periodic reports to all of its members. Show just where the money is, where it has gone, where it is going.

"To further still suspicion and distrust, it is necessary to broaden the total of people helping in the decision making. Spread it out and around.

"Food buying clubs, we find, tend to be associated with larger institutions. One of ours is closely linked to a Catholic church in the neighborhood, another came out of a welfare clients' council.

"We went out of business the first time. Poor administration and the club was extending credit to some families when they should have said cash only.

"Now each family puts in a quarter a week. This is the first time many of them have put even a quarter aside for the future. When they build it up to ten bucks and we tell them they can take it back, most say 'I'll keep it in' and keep on saving. As the quarters mount up their interest in the club mounts.

"How to make money? All low-income organizations have this problem. How do we finance ourselves? Through forming such co-ops, people soon find they can sell cheaper but still have a mark-up quite below the corner grocer. Sell cheaper but still make money for the organization. That's the rule.

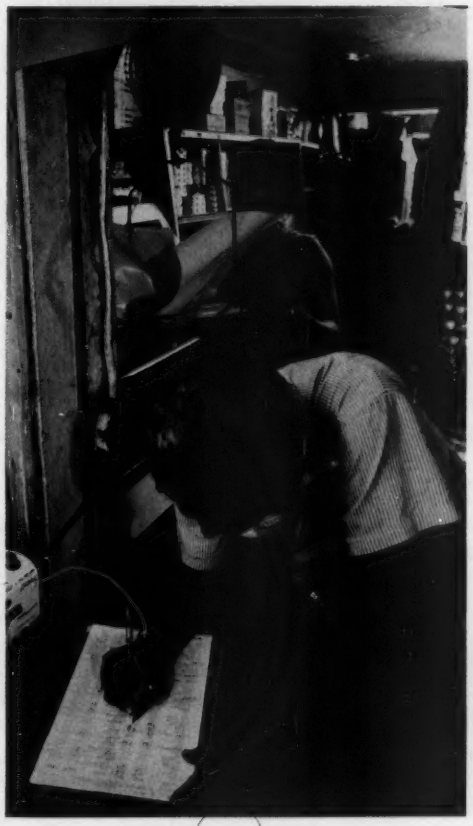
"We affect the neighborhood merchant but we do not do the kind of volume that would make wholesalers turn us away. At least we haven't made that impact as yet.

"These clubs reach a maximum. They reach an immediate neighborhood. A few blocks this way, that way. Membership rises, then levels off.

"In the beginning, especially, you need a nucleus of people who want to make it work and are stable enough to stick with it. Each time we began with 10, the second time most of those same 10 begin again.

"Even as this small club began to grow, nice things happened. One company with whom they dealt gave a refrigerator for perishables. In the beginning the members had to chase all over the city to wholesalers which was exhausting. Now that we've grown, two-thirds of the stuff is now delivered. That is a considerable operational savings.

"And remember this, in a low-income neighborhood, there are people who will work for nothing. They have nothing to do and a need to do something useful so you don't have to worry about where your help is coming from. People pitch in and help if the idea seems worthwhile to them."



What do you do while waiting for grandiose urban renewal plans to materialize?

The remodeled house on these pages is one answer.

This question haunts community action workers in daily contact with people of the slums of our great cities. Everything seems created to prevent even the most humble repair to the awful and ancient buildings which house the poor. The multi-headed devil of municipal bureaucracy, landlords in absentia, prohibitive construction costs, dwindling city treasuries, no private lending money, unions, ad nauseum make it difficult for the poor to get so much as a faucet washer changed let alone have access to new or improved low-cost housing.

Working on the theory that doing something is better than waiting around for the welter of problems surrounding slum housing to ever be cleared, Manhattan's Mobilization For Youth tackled the challenge with characteristic directness.

MFY showed what could be done with one tenement house not only in terms of its rehabilitation but as a way of employment, job training and tenant education factors into the remodeling of slum housing itself.

With a Ford Foundation grant of $100,000 as base MFY purchased a vacant house on 5th St. The building was what New Yorkers term an "old law tenement" erected under the very unenlightened housing codes of the turn of the century. Few windows, hallway toilets that serve several families, no courtyards for ventilation, cost: $25,000.

Neighborhood Youth Corps funds were used to hire youths from the community for work on the rehabilitation project. MFY by this very logical use of existing

resources found itself in its first bind. Because the kids were being paid NYC prevailing wages the house could not be financed under FHA mortgaging because such loans have a provision that a certain wage scale be paid construction workers.

The FHA rules were to protect regular building trades workers but could not be stretched to consider the special circumstances of hiring unskilled youngsters who would be learning as they worked.

An added complication was that the crew of youngsters hired for the job were so used to broken promises that each day they had to be reassured that work would be available to them the following day.

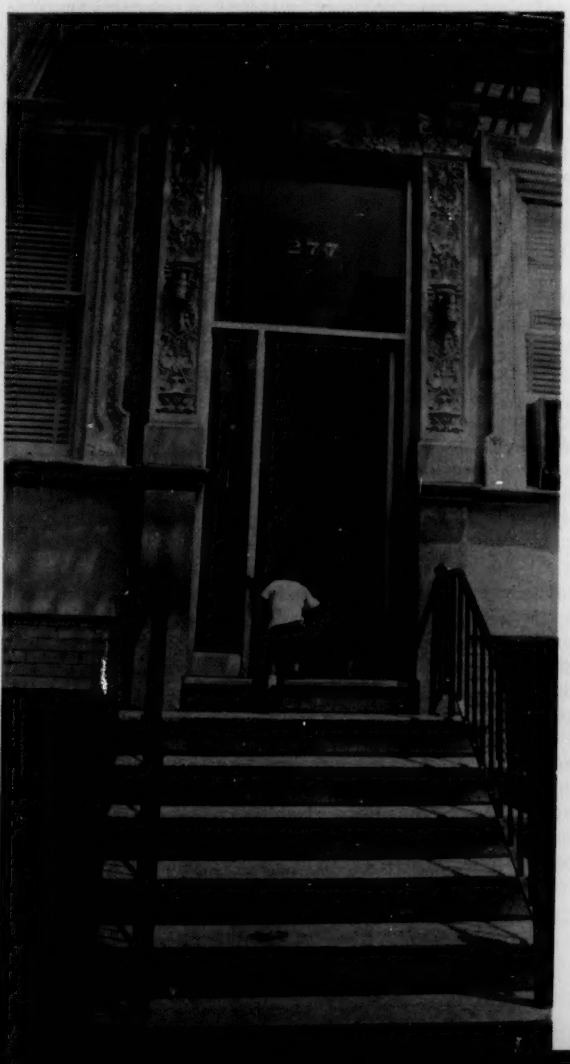
The youngsters, under supervision of a skilled contractor, gutted the building. They helped skilled craftsmen with the restoration. New wiring, sheetrock, cementing, plumbing was installed.

The photographs with this account vividly show what can be done in restoration and/or remodeling of existing property which no matter how horribly deteriorated is still structurally sound.

Very important is the cost analysis made on the project by MFY housing experts. Rehabilitation of a two-bedroom "old-law" apartment would cost about $14,000 at present prices, high but still below the astronomical costs of new construction in New York City.

Equally important is the proof that unskilled youth can be put immediately to work in neighborhoods where they live, receive basic building trade skill training and then go into the regular labor system.

Finally, since maintenance of low-income property is of special importance, formation of a tenants' council was the last phase of the MFY rehab house project. The best way to get people to take care of rental property, MFY supposes, is to give them the responsibility for the property. In the house shown, a very active and cooperative Tenants Council is proving that people can live constructively.



Root Causes

Q. Mr. Shriver, what do you feel is the best way to prevent riots in the future?

A. From my experience the only genuine, the only permanent answer to preventing riots is **to attack the causes which produce riots.**

First of all, when we overcrowd people into specialized areas or specific areas of a city, we're in trouble. When we don't have jobs for those people or job training for them, we're in trouble. When they've got poor housing, when they've got overcrowded schools, when, for example, they're on double shift, when there's nobody from the so-called "establishment" talking to them, listening to them, actually doing things with them—not *for* them, but *with* them—then we're in trouble.

I don't know of a case so far where a riot occurred where these conditions which produce riots didn't exist *before* the riot.

From a transcript of an interview with Sargeant Shriver, Director of OEO, for Mutual Broadcasting System:

In the first story of this issue, a New York anti-poverty official has described the inssurectionists of Detroit and other cities wracked by violence this summer as "Moynihan's missing fathers." (See "Powder Keg"—page 3)

Moynihan, being Daniel P., the perceptive urbanologist on the staff of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and chief author of "The Negro Family, The Case For National Action," a remarkable document prepared by Moynihan and confreres for the Office of Policy Planning and Research of the Department of Labor in 1965.

. . . Missing Fathers, to complete the definition, are those thousands of adult black males in ghettoes, unemployed, alienated and for a myriad of reasons unavailable to their families.

What Val Coleman is saying in this issue's lead article, like it or not, is that a lot of what Moynihan reported as reality in American society is reality.

Moynihan's study was blasted to whatever hell is reserved for social theorists and back again upon its release, by Negro intellectuals who found him wanting on all counts.

Such a controversy ensued that many in government abandoned all of Moynihan rather than salvaging that which was pertinent.

Maybe this set up the outrage:

Quoting from the report: "At the heart of the deterioration of the fabric of Negro society is the deterioration of the Negro family. It is the fundemental source of the weakness of the Negro community at the present time."

And further: "there is one truly great discontinuity in family structure in the United States at the present time: that between the white world in general and that of the Negro American.

Moreover: "The white family has achieved a high degree of stability and is maintaining that stability . . . By contrast, the family structure of lower class Negroes is highly unstable and in many urban centers is approaching complete breakdown."

Perhaps Negro leaders read no further.

And so Moynihan reaped a whirlwind, no matter that much of what is in "The Negro Family" explains in detail and with some humanity just why urban ghettoes are going up in flames and nihilism prevails. Perhaps the mildest comment on Moynihan's work came from Claude Brown, author of "Man Child In The Promised Land," who noted that Dr. Moynihan is talking about the disorganization of the Negro family when "in truth the Negro family has never been able to get organized."

That part of Moynihan's treatise which is worth our notice, in thinking about directions of community action, is understanding why ghetto people are exploding. To move with good sense and great vision toward programs of constructive solution, one must deal with the lingering question of a heritage of slavery.

No American wants to dwell on our history of slavery. Neither blacks nor whites.

It is much too painful but it is here that Dr. Moynihan, no matter what else he said (or closer to the truth, how he said what he said) was on sure ground.

Chapter Three of "The Negro Family" entitled "The Roots Of The Problem" begins on a dramatically remarkable note. We find a distinguished American sociologist, saying it in a publication sponsored by the government.

"The most perplexing question about American slavery, which has never been altogether explained, and which indeed most Americans hardly know exists, has been stated by Nathan Glazer as follows: "Why was American slavery the most awful the world has ever known?" The only thing that can be said with certainty is that this is true: it was."

Dr. Moynihan then proceeds quickly

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with knowing hand and without slip to trace the lot of black Americans from that terrible pre-civil War time (1609 until 1865) and beyond, if you concur with the prevailing ghetto mood of this time, that now is just a new kind of the same old slavery.

From the report:

"American slavery was profoundly different from, and in its lasting effects on individuals and their children, indescribably worse than, any recorded servitude, ancient or modern."

He then cites the ranking scholars on American slavery.

Quoting Glazer, who compares Brazil's slavery with that of this nation's: "In Brazil, the slave had many more rights than in the United States: he could legally marry . . . his family could not be broken up for sale and he had many days on which he could either rest or earn money to buy his freedom. The Government encouraged manumission, and the freedom of infants could be often purchased for a small sum at the baptismal font. In short, the Brazilian slave knew he was a man and that he differed in degree, not in kind, from his master.

Conversely: "in the United States, the slave was totally removed from the protection of organized society. His existence as a human being was given no recognition by any religious or secular agency, he was totally ignorant of and completely cut off from his past and he was offered absolutely no hope for the future. His children could be sold, his marriage was not recognized, his wife could be violated or sold . . . and he could also be subject without redress to frightful barbarities—there were presumably as many sadists among slaves owners, men and women, as there are in other groups.

"The slave could not, by law, be taught to read or write: he could not practice any religion without the permission of his master, and could never meet with his fellows, for religious or any other purposes except in the presence of a white, and finally, if a master wished to free him, every legal obstacle was used to thwart such action.

"This was not what slavery meant in the ancient world, in medieval and early modern Europe, or in Brazil and the West Indies."

End of quote from Glazer.

Moynihan takes twentieth century Americans through some more necessary pain in his rapid but effective recital.

He recalls Stanley M. Elkins, writing on the parallels of American slavery and the behavior of prisoners in Nazi concentration camps. The two institutions, Moynihan noted, were remarkably similar in many aspects.

Citing Elkins: "The profound personality change created by Nazi internment, as independently reported by a number of psychologists and psychiatrists who survived, was toward childishness and total acceptance of the SS guards as father figures—a syndrome strikingly similar to the "Sambo" caricature of the Southern slave.

"Nineteenth century racists readily believed that the "Sambo" personality was simply an inborn racial type. Yet no African anthropological data has ever shown a personality type resembling Sambo: and the concentration camps molded the equivalent personality pattern in a wide variety of Caucasian prisoners."

What is reported in "The Negro Family," Elkins, by way of Moynihan, is that when Europeans were treated as horribly and as similarly as Americans treated blacks during slavery, as proven in the Nazi death camps, the same devastation of personality occurred.

The damage, Moynihan is reporting, has been done. After emancipation, "the Negro American family began to form in the United States on a widespread scale but it did so in an atmosphere markedly different from that which has produced the white American family.

"The Negro was given liberty, but not equality, life remained hazardous and marginal. Of the greatest importance, the Negro male, particularly in the South, became an object of intense hostility, an attitude unquestionably based in some measure on fear."

"When Jim Crow made its appearance toward the end of the 19th century, it may be speculated that it was the Negro male who was most humiliated thereby: . . . segregation and the submissiveness it exacts, is surely more destructive to the male than to the female personality. Keeping the Negro in his place can be translated as keeping the Negro male in his place: the female was not a threat to anyone."

Herein, are the wellsprings of much that has thoughtful citizens in anguish about the entwined problems of poverty and race in this nation.

"The slave household often developed a fatherless matrifocal (mother-centered) pattern," recalling Elkins once more, and Moynihan then launches his second important theme, the Negro family as matriarchal in a society that is patriarchal.

Here black leaders collided again with Moynihan but this perhaps had more to do with what those of us who stem from black ghettos call "playing the dozens" (talking disparagingly about a man's mother) then with the facts of Negro male unemployment Moynihan used to buttress this circumstance.

And there is the slightly humorous slant, if we view humor as tragedy unemotionally observed (to borrow from James Thurber), that it is tough as all get out to be a black leader if Dan Moynihan is going around citing statistics to show that black women have been holding things together all the time.

But returning to the Moynihan report, the point is, the national interest demands an awareness that the most pressing urban problem boils down to a simple reality, black American

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males of the ghettos have to be given the opportunity to be men.

This theme is the warp and woof of "The Negro Family."

The Office of Economic Opportunity through its Community Action Programs has acknowledged this need.

When OEO has been saying 'an end to public welfare' it has recognized far ahead of most that public welfare, whether we care to think it humane or not, has its origins in slavery.

It is part of that bitter heritage. Consider welfare practices. The dependent mother is paid for the children she breeds by the state but the man who fathers them is robbed of the means to provide for them by the long-standing combination of racism and deprivation that has been his lot historically.

Public Welfare continues a dangerous and misguided game.

In slavery the black mother who was, in plantation semantics, a "breeder" was a cherished machine for profit. Her man might be sold, sent away, worked to death but since she was in the business of producing more slaves for future generations she was regarded highly.

In modern times, the overwhelming number of our social welfare programs still focus on that mother, it is she and her children who are helped (or her female children because the black male child reaches his teens to find the economic cards are stacked against him already). The father is kept outside this center of family not only by the unavailability of work but also simply because he is black, and a father.

At this very moment, OEO Legal Service Lawyers in many cities are involved in court tests to determine if welfare agencies have a right to insist that the father of a poor woman's children are to be kept away from the home so long as the mother receives welfare. ("The man in the house" rule)

What is being asked, fundamentally, is whether the welfare agency is going to be father to the Negro family or whether the natural fathers are to be at long last granted that right.

It cannot be both ways and when we repeat Claude Brown's rejoinder that "the Negro family was never organized enough to become disorganized," we may see as was the New York poverty official's angry retort in the beginning of this issue, "we got to get rid of a repressive welfare system and replace it with a system that does not denigrate people's pride . . ."

Concentrating on self-help for the poor male seems a necessary order of business.

OEO-funded OIC projects in major cities is a giant step. (See **Communities In Action,** June 1967 Vol.) It takes poor men off the streets, invests them with self-pride, gives them a useful work skill then works with industry to find jobs that ensure they will be productive citizens and fathers no one can number among the missing.

In the wake of the Detroit nightmare of July, Daniel P. Moynihan himself was quoted as saying, we must continue our devotion to all of the poor. The significance of that city's violence is that what we now must do is devise imaginative programs that reach what he termed "the undeserving poor." Looters, burners, criminal insurrectionists, gangsters. There are reasons for it. Many of these reasons are contained in Dr. Moynihan's not so controversial in the wisdom of hindsight "The Negro Family."

If both black and white intellectuals, social planners and just plain taxpayers will go back and re-think the salient points less emotionally it will sharpen the focus.

What is clear is that ghetto riots stem from something much deeper than contemporary disrespect for law and order. That is an easy cop-out for people who either don't know American history, except the good parts, or are so insulated from their fellows they are disoriented from reality. Snipers on roof-tops are saying something that has its real origins in 1609 when the first black slaves were brought to this country.

A last word on Moynihan et al. The foreword to "The Negro Family" is an exerpt from President Johnson's 1965 State of the Union Message:

"Two hundred years ago, in 1765, nine assembled colonies first joined together to demand freedom from aribitrary power.

"For the first century we struggled to hold together the first continental union of democracy in the history of man. One hundred years ago, in 1865, following a terrible test of blood and fire, the compact of union was finally sealed.

"For a second century we labored to establish a unity of purpose and interest among the many groups which make up the American community.

"That struggle has often brought pain and violence. It is not yet over."

Moynihan's work, where it addresses itself to those causes, has great meaning. He is worth a return visit. The statistics on urban unemployment alone point out where our problems reside.

—R. M. Jr.

"PEACETOWN USA"

Officials of nearly every city in every state know now this is truly a "long hot summer" and it's only a little more than half over. Most are wondering if their cities will be the next scenes of destruction, riots and looting.

IT can happen. *IT* can happen anywhere!

Youngstown, Ohio, an industrial complex with a population of approximately 165,000, is certainly no giant among the nation's "big" cities. However, in the past it has shared notoriety with the biggest. In the early 1960's it was even tagged, "Murdertown, U.S.A."

This year Youngstown is seeking a new title. It wants to be known as "Peacetown, U.S.A.," and there are 27 reasons why it may win that name—26 young police cadets and a Community Action Program sponsored by the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Youngstown Area Community Action Council.

Before the "long hot summer" set in, the Community Action Council, which operates five comprehensive neighborhood service centers, launched a crash summer work and recreation program which provided jobs for more than 600 unemployed youth of Mahoning County. Recreation projects keep thousands busy from morning to night.

This dynamic summer program, highlighted by the police cadet phase, is the main reason why Youngstown has so far avoided rioting, according to area officials.

The program is called, "Operation Summer, 1967," but it may continue throughout the year and for years to come.

"Cool it baby, let's break it up. Make it man, the party's over. Trouble's no good baby, clear out. Freddie, what you doin here? Go home, hear!"

That's all it took in Youngstown to squelch three potential riots as a handful of youthful Negro police cadets dramatically walked through a milling mob of more than 300 youths who were tense enough to strike out at a mere shadow. Local police stood by and watched with amazement—no gun was drawn, no mace lifted, nobody clubbed. MOST important, there were no riots.

The cadets, who range in age from 16 to 21, have gained public praise from regular police, Police Chief John Terlesky, Mayor Anthony B. Flask and hundreds of area officials—black and white.

"These are our boys," explained one of the young cadets. "We know how to keep them out of trouble." Ironically, some of the trouble makers in the crowd disbursed by the cadets said, "These are our boys (referring to the cadets). Let's do as they say."

Another of the youthful cadets, known and respected by his peers for his ability to throw a right cross harder than anyone in town, said, "More than half of us (the cadets) have been in plenty of scrapes. We know the guys we're dealing with; we talk their language." Thus, the gap between youth and the authorities has been bridged in Youngstown.

Captain Carmen Bruno, chief of Youngstown detectives, said the cadet program is working out very, very well. While the cadets do not have the power to make arrests, they do have the influence and backing of police officers, reports Bruno.

According to the Youngstown *Vindicator,* the city's only daily newspaper, "The youthful cadets can calm a hot-head spoiling for a fight, or mingle in a crowd urging excited youngsters to go home. Their tools are familiarity with the neighborhoods and persuasive in-talk powers of speech.

The cadets are being trained in all phases of police work, reports Terlesky and Bruno. They work in the Juvenile Division, traffic, regular patrols, ballistics, etc.

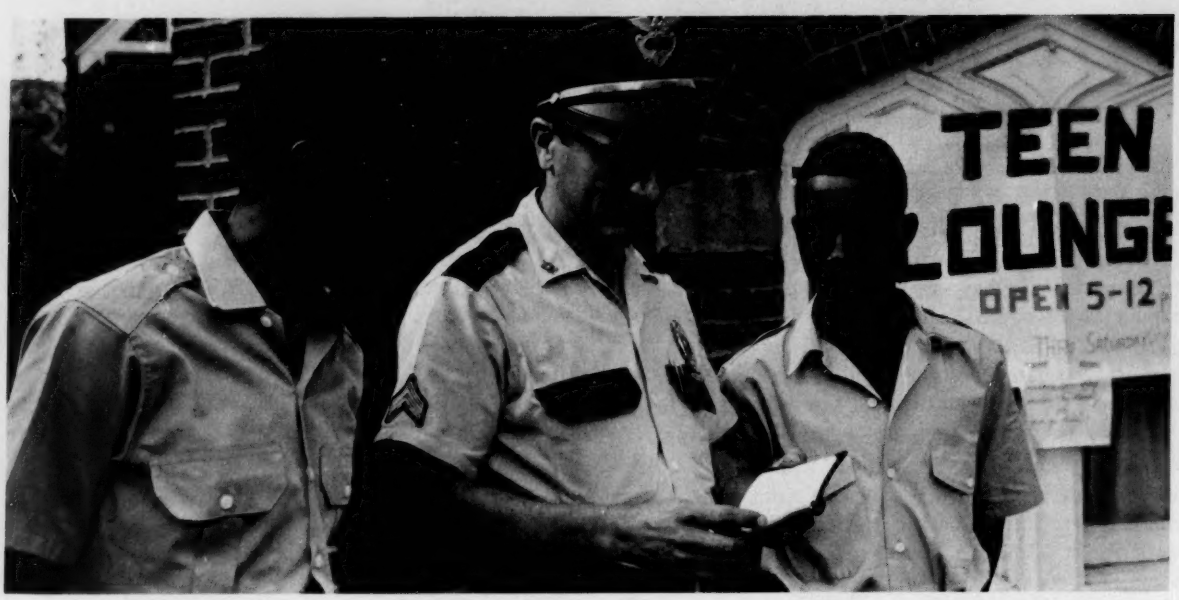
"Our goal is to expand the cadet program and see to it that it continues throughout the year," says James M. Oliver, executive director of the CAP Program. Oliver, who mapped the entire summer program, said the CAP office is planning a new careers program to train youth and young adults in similar fields. "We're striving to gain steady employment for the unemployed and underemployed."

According to Oliver, "The Cadet Program is a tremendous training ground for our youth. We have nothing but praise for city officials and police who are working so cooperatively to help," he continued. "Our chances of getting full-time employment for many of our "trainees" is better than ever now."

Part of the work of the cadets is keeping teen-agers off the streets. They supervise activities at teen lounges, another inovation of the CAP office where thousands of youth congregate each week. The lounges are for relaxing and entertainment; there is no drinking or gambling.

Coffee and soft drinks are sold by teenagers themselves who operate canteens. Any profits derived from the canteens are used for dances, hayrides and similar entertainment which is also supervised by the cadets.

"We require good grooming in order to get into the lounges," reports Mrs. Ellowese Barganier, director



of the summer program. "We won't allow admission if the teens don't dress neatly. Thanks to the cadets, we haven't had trouble along these lines."

There have been some problems at the teen lounges, but on every occasion police officers stood back and watched the cadets go to work. The trouble has been slight.

The teen lounge project has proved so popular that the CAP office expanded its original program from four lounges to seven. According to Oliver, plans are also being made to continue the lounge entertainment through the winter.

Some of the other activities offered under the Youngstown area Summer Program include health clinics, sports information and physical fitness, athletic competition, a special day camp and cultural enrichment projects.

The day camp program offers supervised activities for thousands of youngsters 6 to 12 years of age. James Connolly, project director, describes the program as unique in size and scope, and feels it will become an example for the entire State of Ohio.

There are more than 20 day camp centers with 110 groups of children participating. Each center is under the supervision of a trained counselor and general supervisors of college age who were hired under the program.

Highlight of the recreation program was a Jesse Owens Track Meet, supervised by Owens himself in cooperation with the CAP office and several community agencies. More than 600 boys and girls from throughout Mahoning County participated in the two-day affair.

Youngsters participating in all phases of the summer program are enjoying field trips to zoos, farms, museums, bakeries, municipal offices, etc. Other entertainment includes movies, horseback riding, plays, hay rides, roller skating, dancing and drama lessons.

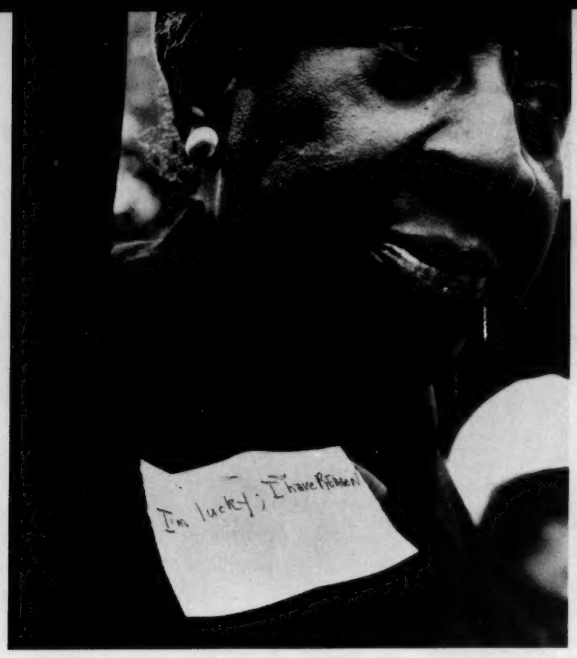
"We launched the program before we got into the real heat of summer and we've attempted to utilize every available resource in the community," reports Director Oliver. "The entire county has been most cooperative.

"Many of our youth wouldn't have had much to do this summer if it hadn't been for the summer program," he asserted. "Our goal was to provide a broad program to keep them busy and it looks as though we've succeeded.

"We've set another goal now—we're determined to see that almost every facet of the summer activity continues. We must look to the future for the sake of our youth and our community."

CAP, its director James Oliver, Youngstown's Mayor Anthony B. Flask, the numerous cooperating community social agencies, police, civic leaders, black and white and all who have aided the Youngstown area summer program add up to a powerful pillar of Community Action Mahoning County Style.

—Stephen G. Clapp
Bureau Chief, Niles
Publishing Co., Niles, Ohio



Reason's promise

Operation REASON, the OEO-funded health service project operated by Baltimore's Health and Welfare Council, means Responding to the Elderlies' Abilities and Sickness Otherwise Neglected.

It is in its third year, although originally funded as a two-year demonstration project.

REASON seeks two major goals: 1) to help people over 60 get jobs, and 2) to enable chronically ill elderly persons with neglected illness and other socio-medical problems to use community services available to them.

As the following data shows, REASON is having an impact and could well serve as a model job-health program for many communities.

REASON'S client group numbers 500 persons over 60 with physical, emotional and social problems. More than one-half of them are 70 years of age or older and one-third are more than 75.

About 50 percent of the people referred to REASON were found by Community Action Agency workers, usually by door-to-door canvassing. The remaining half were referrals from other community agencies, families and REASON staff. Some of this portion of clients found REASON on their own initiative.

Most of these elderly live alone or with unrelated persons. Most have no family to care for them.

Some 75 percent of clients have incomes of $100 monthly or less.

Some 20 percent of them are confined to bed or wheelchairs.

Two-thirds of REASON'S clients were referred for specific reasons: *i.e.,* need for transportation and/or escort service to health or social agencies, need for medical appliances. The others needed help with such problems as loneliness, income and housing.

The majority of persons served are long-time Baltimore residents, many of whom have lived in the same dwelling several decades.

Total cost per year per client has been less than $230, far less than the cost per month of nursing home care or other institutionalization.

Waiting . . .

Well, if you consider she was 78, recovering from a broken shoulder and it was going to be one of those hot Baltimore days, Mrs. Lurhetta Magers guessed she wasn't doing too bad.

But she certainly wished to the Lord the lady from REASON would be coming along presently. . . . Mrs. Johnsy Jennings, that would be. It sure brightened the day when old Jennings came by.

Mrs. Magers watched, a mite fearfully, from the front window of her apartment in a low-income housing project on Baltimore's east side. Jennings might not come. It was not Mrs. Magers' day to go to the hospital . . . but Jennings had said she would be by.

Mrs. Magers eased her heavy body into the easy chair, folded her hands, listened to the children playing in the court and waited.

The visitor regarded remembered Baltimore streets from the taxi window. The cab raced east along Orleans Street. At left, the dull red brick and dark spires of the Johns Hopkins Hospital rose from the

highest ground of this part of the city. A turn and another turn down two narrow streets flanked the hopsital and the visitor left the cab, paused before one of a row of narrow houses, read a hand-painted red sign, "Operation REASON," Scotch-taped in what once was someone's living room window, then mounted the white marble steps. A young man typed busily at the near desk, a girl at the back of the tiny front office answered the phone.

"Mr. Conway will be right with you."

Bailey Conway, director of REASON, bounded down the steps. He was a pleasant young man with a red-striped tie and a bright voice. He said, "I'll introduce you to the staff and then I'll try to answer any questions you have about Operation REASON."

The visitor followed him back into what had been a working man's home.

You are as old as you feel, and Mrs. Johnsy Jennings wheeled her huffing 12-year-old Buick down Caroline Street toward Mrs. Magers' place as peppy as you please.

She was 67 and she had a job to do and she liked her job and when you are doing something you like to do, the years don't pile up on you so hard.

Mrs. Jennings took the turn and edged the car into the curb, reached in for her briefcase, slammed the door and bustled along toward Lurhetta Magers' home. She was careful approaching that curb in the courtyard —that was the one Mrs. Magers had tripped on that night and broken her arm.

"Poor dear, she's probably fidgeting. You know how old folks get when they are by themselves so much."

"That you, Jennings?"

"Yes, child, it's me."

The woman tried to sound gruff but when Mrs. Jennings gave the older woman a cheerful hug and told her how well she looked, her eyes filled with a mist of tears and laughter.

Mrs. Jennings likes her job with REASON for things like this. It was more than just work; it was bringing yourself to somebody else.

* * *

Bailey Conway was saying to the visitor, "The best way to find out what we do is just go out with our health aides and see for yourself. Mrs. Einhorn will take you around. Mrs. Einhorn is one of the jewels in our crown. She was a health aide and she's been promoted from a non-professional to center supervisor.

"I'll stack Mrs. Einhorn up against any social worker I know and as a social worker with a Master's degree, I don't say this lightly. Social work is very near and dear to me. For creativity and sincerity she can't be beat."

Myrtle Einhorn is young by REASON's standards. REASON is a two-year demonstration project funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity and administered by the Health and Welfare Council of the Baltimore Area, Inc. Most of the non-professional health aides are over 60.

REASON has two goals: to help older employable people get jobs and to assist chronically-ill elderly persons without resources or mobility get needed medical services.

Mrs. Einhorn, in her early 40's, is with REASON because she knows the community, she is a fighter and she sees the job through.

"Almost single-handedly," Conway had marveled, "in her early 20's she almost closed down a West Virginia factory in a labor dispute. She's a former International Ladies Garment Workers Union organizer, so she knows how to move folks."

As a health aide, Mrs. Einhorn's job was to get out and find poor, old, chronically sick people and help them with medical and social problems.

"You just have to find them," she said. Some, people tell you about. Some are referred by social or health service agencies and some you just sort of stumble across. I'm telling you, it can be a terrible thing. Just think of it. In big cities like Baltimore, who knows how many old people are dying all alone."

Mrs. Einhorn shuddered. "One of my first cases when I started with REASON two years ago was an old woman who was too far gone by the time I got there. I opened her door, and she was on the floor bleeding to death . . . cancer."

But there are more joys to what she did than sorrow. Like this spring when REASON did not know if the government was going to provide money to continue the project.

"Well, I just know this is a wonderful program. I've seen how many old people we've been able to help, get to the hospitals, get the food, help them in so many ways in their last years, that I just didn't think we ought to let them down by closing down and saying, 'Well, that was a nice experiment,' and let them sink

back into loneliness and unnecessary illness," she said.

Mrs. Einhorn had an inspiration. 'Let's ask the President for help.' You don't underestimate International Ladies Garment Workers' Union ladies.

"I asked some of our old people if they wanted to march on Washington. You should have seen the turnout. A mass meeting. Well, we scrambled around and got transportation, we printed signs protesting the stoppage of funds, we got young people, VISTA volunteers and others, to help as escorts. These were people in their 60's and 70's, mind you, and they were willing to endure anything to let the President know how much REASON had helped them.

"We started out to protest in front of the White House, old folks in wheelchair, on crutches, I was so proud of them. It was raining but they were ready to march all day and then we found that the funds had been continued and there was no point in protesting, so we ended up marching in front to the White House thanking the government for coming through.

"But, believe me, those elderly people were ready to fight for their program. You just can't ever write people off no matter what their circumstances are."

There was this Washington cop on duty, Mrs. Einhorn recalled, whom she asked if the march was causing any interference. The cop looked at the aged, the infirm, walking proudly or hobbling or being wheeled, drenched by rain, then looked at Mrs. Einhorn painfully. "Lady, I couldn't to anything to them even if they were doing something wrong."

Yes, that had been a great day. But this was a good day, too, so Mrs. Einhorn hurried the visitor along. "I want you to meet Mrs. Magers. She's really a dear."

There's a Baltimore west side office for REASON, also. Bailey Conway has to shuttle back and forth. His number-two man is a woman. A nurse, Adele Wilzak. Not a starched white uniform nurse. Adele Wilzak is a rebel. She admits it. She comes to work in sophisticated clothes. The project doctor, Bernard Harris, Jr., is assigned part time, but Miss Wilzak is there full time. She anchors the chronic illness team, teaches health aides and spends much of her time solving problems brought in by the health aides from their work in the streets of Baltimore.

REASON is "wild," she finds. "It represents a drastic break with traditional nursing philosophy."

And the break couldn't come soon enough for Miss Wilzak. She always felt there was more to her profession. Projects like REASON are opening it up for she has to know more than medicine, she has to know community organization and sociology and how to teach health fundamentals to non-professionals and how to negotiate the straits of municipai bureaucracies. She has a Master of Science degree and is eager to learn much more.

It's wheeling and dealing, her job, and it means getting nursing out of the protective confines of hospitals to where the people are and where a lot more problems besides illness must be faced.

"In the staff meetings I've had health aides tell me, 'I'm all wet,' and it's wild to hear this because you know they have their fingers on the problem directly and you listen and learn. We work as a team of equals."

There's excitement. A health aide calls in from the field with a case that needs immediate action and Miss Wilzak responds to this challenge. She has to come up with an answer. What's to be done if the doctor is not available, no social workers are around and it is involving someone's life? You have to become all of these things instantly and that is part of the break with CAP and "yes, doctor," and ward rules. Adele Wilzak knows it's high time more nurses got into community action. She doesn't say it but the visitor feels she is

relieved to be a nurse who has to fall back on her resources, instead of going by rote, a nurse who has to think and feel in dramatic new ways.

The visitor followed Mrs. Myrtle Einhorn into the apartment of Mrs. Luhretta Magers.

When had Mrs. Magers had this much company, my lands! Mrs. Johnsy Jennings was on the old divan. Mrs. Magers was holding court from her easy chair by the window.

"Mrs. Jennings is one of REASON's paid escorts," Mrs. Einhorn explained. "She sees that infirm clients get back and forth from the clinics or social agency and she checks up periodically to see that they are coming along all right or if they need anything."

Luhretta Magers was nodding agreement.

"What would I do without Jennings?" she said.

Mrs. Jennings said, "Me and her fuss all the time. I said this morning, 'Girl, I don't know what I'm going to do with you when you get well.' "

Mrs. Magers pouted.

Johnsy Jennings sensed something. She chuckled and patted the woman on the arm. "I guess I'll just have to drop by and see you anyway."

Mrs. Magers smiled.

The doctors had put steel pins in Mrs. Magers' arm after her fall. She rolled up her sleeve and showed the scar. Then she lifted something off a table by her chair.

"That's one of the pins. I use it for a letter opener now."

She wanted the visitor to know what a help REASON had been. "I guess I would have died before this if they hadn't taken me to the doctor."

Mrs. Einhorn explained that the woman had no one to look after her. She had been referred by a health aide who lived nearby.

"I have a daughter here in the city but she's too sick to care for me or for herself for that matter," said Mrs. Magers. "I'm so weak I can't walk by myself too far so I have to hang on to Jennings' arm and let her steer me around. That fall really shook me up, not only my arm but all over."

Mrs. Magers was just full of wonder. REASON had done so much for her. She remembered something.

"Jennings, now I'm depending on you to help me get my glasses changed. She held up the cracked eye glasses she still wore. "Had 'em on when I fell. They're so wobbly."

The two REASON workers conferred about this. They would think of something to get around the Welfare Department ruling that glasses would be issued only where a client had a job in view.

Mrs. Jennings "humphed" about that. It didn't make sense. "If your hearing goes and your sight fails, there's not much to living."

Mrs. Magers did not mind too much. She knew her friends here would think of some way to help.

It was time to leave. Mrs. Magers rose painfully and walked slowly to the next room.

"I want you to see what I've made."

She returned with two colorful little mementos she had sewn. The women complimented her.

"I have to do something."

Mrs. Einhorn held the woman's hands. "We want you to take care of yourself, dear, and let us know the minute you need anything."

"Do you have to go now?"

" 'Fraid so."

The three of them stood in the doorway a moment longer talking softly, then Mrs. Einhorn and Mrs. Jennings hurried down the walk.

"I never like this part of it," said Mrs. Einhorn. "She's all alone again."

"Yeah," said Johnsy Jennings. "When I leave, she cries. She's crying now."

Reason's process

Services For the Unemployed Aged: this part of Operation REASON is carried out by Baltimore's Over-60 Employment Counseling Service. Aged residents of low-income neighborhoods who seek full or part-time jobs are helped by this contracting agency.

Applicants are found and referred by neighborhood Community Action workers, the Department of Welfare and other sources. Over-60 Service counselors interview prospects either in neighborhood centers or at the agency office. Job counseling and job placement follow.

Applicants are provided transportation and other assistance in getting employment. Follow-up services by Over-60 counselors are on a monthly schedule. There is close coordination continuously between the Community Action Neighborhood Development counselors with any problems applicants might have not related to illness or job placement.

Services For the Chronically Ill Aged: this second phase of REASON uses "Chronic Illness teams" experimentally to identify, register and help the elderly in low-income neighborhoods. Two teams operate East and West in Baltimore. Teams consist of a supervisor of health aides, three health aides and 15 paid escorts. A physician and nurse serve as teaching consultants to both chronic illness teams.

Cases are located and referred primarily by Community Action workers. Chronic illness teams then move in to see that health and social needs of each client are met. The teams act as links between the needy aged and the regular service agencies, medical, institutional, seeing that clients get every service for which they are eligible. REASON has limited emergency funds to purchase medical and dental treatment and related supplies for people who do not meet eligibility requirements.

The REASON doctor coordinates with private physicians who serve the Community Action area and advises and teaches health aides.

The REASON nurse assists the physician in maintaining contact with health service agencies. She carries the major responsibility for seeing that medical needs of clients (mental and physical) are met. She compiles the continuing case histories and register of each client. The REASON nurse also trains health aides in the medical phases of their jobs.

REASON health aides supervisors are professional staff members who guide the aides and escorts and give them day-to day, on-the-job training. They are the link, also, with city social service agencies.

Health aides on the REASON teams visit homes of people referred, keep in touch with clients and their families, arrange for escort service of clients to and from hospitals, agencies and clinics, and when needed act as *aggressive advocates* on the clients' behalf.

REASON-paid escorts assist health aides, act as interpreters where there are language or cultural barriers standing between clients and services.

All REASON teams combine intensive class training with work in the field and each member of the team contributes his observations and recommendations about each client he has contact with. This information becomes part of the Project history and goes into the individual client portfolio as well.

Aides and escorts are recruited from Community Action neighborhoods.

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